

August 2008

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**Recommended Citation**

Allen, Ernest Jr. (2008) "'CLOSE RANKS': MAJOR JOEL E. SPINGARN AND THE TWO SOULS OF DR. W. E. B. DU BOIS,"  
*Contributions in Black Studies*: Vol. 3 , Article 4.

Available at: <http://scholarworks.umass.edu/cibs/vol3/iss1/4>

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*Ernest Allen, Jr.*

## “CLOSE RANKS”: MAJOR JOEL E. SPRINGARN AND THE TWO SOULS OF DR. W. E. B. DUBOIS

IT WAS THE SUMMER of 1918. Racism had intensified during the war; the Ku Klux Klan was on the rise once again, and the rituals of America's peculiar institution of lynching continued unchecked. The *Amsterdam News* reported that over 230 black Americans had been murdered by mobs since the country had entered the war.<sup>1</sup> In July of the previous year, the Afro-American community of East St. Louis had been taught a vicious lesson in job competition by skilled and unskilled white labor. (A similar letting of blood would traumatize an even greater number of black communities during the aptly titled “Red Summer” of 1919.) Public screenings of “Birth of a Nation,” that cinematic landmark of jaded artistic sensibility, only served to heighten the general lynch-spirit of the age. Nonetheless, in the face of such atrocities, numerous Afro-American doctors, nurses, and clerks responded enthusiastically to the general, patriotic siren of wartime duty, only to be turned away because of their color. Black soldiers, tempered with the will to extend abroad a “democracy” which neither they nor past black generations had ever experienced at home, complained bitterly of the treatment they received at U.S. Army hands. (Emmett Scott, Booker T. Washington's former secretary, was appointed special assistant to Secretary of War Newton Baker to “troubleshoot” such grievances as well as to address the growing problem of black civilian morale.)

The general situation of black Americans was not particularly encouraging, to say the least. Yet, from one of the staunchest advocates of Afro-American freedom there would emerge a curiously worded call:

Let us, while this war lasts, forget our special grievances and close our ranks shoulder to shoulder with our own white fellow citizens and the allied nations that are fighting for democracy. We make

no ordinary sacrifice, but we make it gladly and willingly with our eyes lifted to the skies.

The voice was that of William Edward Burghardt DuBois, in a lead editorial appearing in the July 1918 *Crisis* magazine. Within the national black community, DuBois' quixotic advice was opposed by some, supported by others.<sup>2</sup> From the pen of one of the Afro-American "wartime radicals," however, the criticism was particularly acerbic and penetrating. Hubert H. Harrison, head of the Liberty League of Negro-Americans and a former Socialist Party member, was quick to note that the *Crisis* editorial and a War Department captaincy recently offered DuBois "fitted too well together as motive and self-interest."<sup>3</sup> Harrison noted, moreover, that the case had "its roots much farther back than the editorial in July's *Crisis*." Months earlier the magazine found itself under investigation by the Justice Department for alleged seditious expression. Then in mid-June a conference of some thirty or so black editors was called in Washington under the aegis of Emmett Scott and Joel Springarn (the latter of which had recently been assigned to military intelligence). DuBois was a prominent party to that conference, the details of which had been kept secret from the general public. It seemed quite clear to Harrison that the apparent "servile virtues of acquiescence and subservience" manifested in DuBois' editorial were hardly a "slip of the pen or a venal error in logic." Rather, the

connection between the successive acts of the drama (May, June, July) was too clear to admit of any interpretation other than that of deliberate, cold-blooded, purposive planning. And the connection with Springarn seemed to suggest that personal friendships and public faith were not good working teammates.<sup>4</sup>

Although lacking specific details of the "drama" which he so unkindly depicted, Hubert H. Harrison's charges proved to be rather incisive in their overall characterization. Only in recent years have researchers, working with declassified military documents, been in a position to confirm the essence of the "script" which Harrison envisioned behind DuBois' call to "Close Ranks." Calculated planning on the part of certain persons, there assuredly was; DuBois' performance, on the other hand, seems to have been propelled more by extreme confusion and naivete.

## II

Joel E. Springarn, one of the early "movers" of the NAACP, had

been promoted to the rank of major and given command of the 311th Infantry batallion during the war. Just prior to his being shipped to the European front in the fall of 1917, Springarn suffered a severe ulcer attack, requiring hospitalization.<sup>5</sup> Following recovery, he was assigned a desk job with the Army's Military Intelligence Branch in the District of Columbia, to which he reported on 27 May 1918. His duties: to carry out intelligence activities with respect to mounting left-wing radicalism in general, and Afro-American "subversive" tendencies in particular.<sup>6</sup> Major Springarn did not drag his feet; within several weeks' time following his appointment he had organized a conference of editors and other black middle-class leaders, lobbied for anti-lynch legislation in Congress, and coaxed the Secretary of War into pressuring President Woodrow Wilson to issue an anti-lynch declaration.

Several structural changes were proposed by Major Springarn in regard to the creation of a "separate and distinct section" of the branch to deal specifically with all such matters; the other called for the creation of an "Advisory Committee to the Chief of Staff of the Army," whose apparent task would be to engage in counter-espionage activities among Afro-Americans.<sup>7</sup> W. E. B. DuBois figured prominently in Springarn's plan "of far-reaching constructive effort to satisfy the pressing grievances of colored Americans. . . ."<sup>8</sup> But could the latter's proposal that DuBois be appointed head of such a committee be made palatable to an intelligence community which, up to this moment, regarded him as a "dangerous radical?" On 10 June Springarn informed a superior of a recent interview with Dr. DuBois, who had apparently agreed that all materials considered for publication in the *Crisis* would now be submitted in advance to a "designated person,"<sup>9</sup> and that the magazine would thereafter become "an organ of patriotic propaganda."<sup>10</sup> Now that the *Crisis* editor had apparently come to recognize the pitfalls of his earlier militancy, Springarn's superiors were prepared to grant him a captaincy in the War Department, which offer was privately tendered on 15 June.<sup>11</sup> The appointment set off a rather well-known controversy within the NAACP: while its Board of Directors generally concurred in the advisability of DuBois' accepting the military appointment, it was virtually unanimous in opposing his bid to retain editorial control over the magazine. Its editor would be forced to choose, in his words, "between devotion to his life work and duty to his country in time of war."<sup>12</sup> As events unfolded, such a choice

would prove unnecessary; but that is jumping a bit ahead of the narrative.

Black public outcry against lynching, bordering on what some authorities considered to be “unpatriotic” expression in a time of war, was a domestic “nuisance” which might well hinder prosecution of U.S. war aims overseas. Though generally supportive of the use of black troops to further the defined interests of the country abroad, the Afro-American press was nevertheless quite given to providing front-page coverage to these almost daily atrocities committed against black Americans. With support from what appears to have been only a handful of colleagues in the Military Intelligence Branch, Springarn understood full well that any unilateral attempt to suppress publication of such stories, while at the same time allowing lynch mobs of white Americans to continue a favored pastime, would, at the very least, lead to further disaffection within the Afro-American national community. Consequently, Major Springarn, aided by Emmett Scott, evolved a plan to appease the most prominent and powerful molders and shapers of “black public opinion.” On 5 June Scott and Springarn drafted a letter to George Creel, chairman of the federal Committee on Public Information, requesting that the Committee sponsor, “at an early date,” a conference of approximately twenty Afro-American editors and about “a dozen or so other influential leaders among the Negro people. . . .”<sup>13</sup> That three-day conference was convened in Washington, D.C. on 19 June. The thirty-one persons in attendance included John H. Murphy of the Baltimore *Afro-American*; Robert L. Vann, Pittsburgh *Courier*; Fred R. Moore, New York *Age*; Benjamin J. Davis, Atlanta *Independent*; Robert R. Moton of Tuskegee Institute; Archibald H. Grimke, president of the Washington branch NAACP; P. B. S. Pinchback, former governor of Louisiana; Kelly Miller, Howard University dean; Robert S. Abbott of the Chicago *Defender*; and W. E. B. DuBois.<sup>14</sup> When the conference opened Wednesday morning, 19 June, the overall atmosphere seemed calculated to play upon the bourgeois sensibilities of black leaders in attendance. “To enliven the occasion for the visitors,” reported the New York *Evening Post*,

a local committee of citizens provided a series of entertainments, which included, among other things, a theatre party of fifty at the Howard Theatre, to witness the presentation of “The Divorce Question” by the Quality Amusement Company, of New York City; a smoker and luncheon in the assembly room of the 12th

Street Y.M.C.A., with Attorney W. L. Houston as toastmaster; and a tour of the city in sight-seeing automobiles, covering views of the parks and public buildings, and the schools, churches, business houses and homes of colored Washington.<sup>15</sup>

A galaxy of "prestigious" speakers was invited to address the conference: Newton D. Baker, Secretary of War; George Creel, Chairman of the Committee on Public Information; Franklin D. Roosevelt, Assistant Secretary of the Navy; Edward N. Hurley, Chairman of the U.S. Shipping Board; as well as Major Spingarn and his brother, Capt. Arthur S. Spingarn of the Medical Reserve Corps. Critical to any discussion of the "controversial" treatment of Afro-American troops overseas were the testimonies of Gen. Paul Vignal, Military Attache of the French Embassy; and Majors Edouard Requin and L. P. Montal of the French High Commission, who also attended. Emmett Scott presided at all of the sessions.<sup>16</sup> "The general plan which Mr. Scott and I had in mind," wrote Spingarn to a superior the day following the conference,

involved a general discussion on the part of all the conferees, so as to permit each man to "let off steam" as much as he desired, and then to guide the discussion in the right direction so that unanimous action might be possible before the conference closed.<sup>17</sup>

The successful and unobtrusive "guidance" of Messrs. Scott and Spingarn resulted in the drafting of an address to the Committee on Public Information. (See Appendix B.) Officially the conclusions of a conference committee, the address was actually the handiwork of W. E. B. DuBois.<sup>18</sup> The document opened with an affirmation of loyalty to the government, outlined in strong terms the principal grievances of black Americans (lynching, the racist refusal of governmental and private institutions to utilize their needed skills, and segregation in travel), and closed with a plea for social reform in the name of justice and wartime efficiency. Unfortunately, not a single word of the firmest language in the document—that pertaining to the "justifiable grievances" of black Americans—was ever made public. First of all, it had been agreed by conferees that a Bill of Particulars on which concrete action might be taken by the government, would be submitted privately to authorities. Second, there had been agreement as well that information concerning the nature and outcome of the conference would be handled solely through the office of Emmett Scott.

As it turned out, however, the bulk of the proposals were simply

ignored by the government; the first agreement therefore deprived the conferees of any forum for mass agitation. As a result of the latter decision, the public version of the Address—as released by Scott through the War Department—was stripped of any detailed reference to complaints registered at the conference. The sanitized interpretation tilted more towards expression of Afro-American loyalty than anything else.<sup>19</sup> But Major Springarn was pleased. He reported privately that

The conference, in my opinion, will have an excellent effect on the colored press, and on the other leaders of the negro race. All were pleased at having been taken into the confidence of the Government and asked for advice and co-operation. The list of grievances which they submitted is on the whole a moderate one; nearly all admit of immediate relief without any fundamental social readjustments; and it seems to me the part of military statesmanship to remedy as many of them as possible at this time.<sup>20</sup>

It would thus be unfair to characterize the conference overall simply as a process of wining, dining, and ultimate compromising of black middle-class leadership—although such machinations obviously played a considerable role there. For behind the scenes Major Springarn was indeed working actively to introduce anti-lynch legislation in Congress through Representative Leonidas Dyer;<sup>21</sup> and through the offices of Secretary of War Newton Baker, President Wilson was urged to issue a statement condemning lynching, which declaration came on 26 July.<sup>22</sup> But Wilson's statement, rather than condemning acts of lynching in the strongest of "anti-patriotic" terms, as Springarn had requested to Baker, took the milder tack of urging white Americans to adhere to standards of "law and order" of which the Germans were purportedly bereft.<sup>23</sup> Ultimately, several versions of the Dyer bill went down to defeat in the U.S. Congress;<sup>24</sup> lacking any means of enforcement, President Wilson's call for civility was condemned to fall flat on the impaired, racist ears of the nation. In effect, then, those prominent Afro-American editors attending the Springarn-Scott conference ended by trading whatever militant demands they may have had—particularly those relating to the public murder of blacks—for shallow promises. Believing that it had envisioned the rays of a new dawn, the Indianapolis-based *Freeman* crowed:

For the first time in history the government at the National Capital actually called into conference private citizens of the Colored race and asked them what should be done to bring their people to a closer and more effective participation in the working out of the

salvation of the nation and the world. . . .

. . . there was born of that gathering the splendid assurance that the Colored man is no longer regarded in high places as a political pawn, more or less necessary to the economic welfare of the country. . . .

Let us gird up our loins for the fray in the knowledge that God reigns and that the government at Washington is and must be a government of and for all the people!<sup>25</sup>

### III

For two months the Army bureaucracy weighed Springarn's proposal to create an advisory committee to the General Staff, headed by W. E. B. DuBois, the vague purpose of which was to carry out "counter-espionage" activities among black Americans. The proposal was then rejected, ostensibly on the grounds that "its broad scope might lead 'beyond the proper limits of military activity.' "<sup>26</sup> What the decision meant in practical terms was that the military would continue in its surveillance of alleged "subversive" activities of Afro-Americans within and without the armed forces, while essentially choosing to ignore the underlying conditions which produced them.<sup>27</sup>

Joel Springarn believed that his presence within the Military Intelligence Branch would somehow make a difference with respect to its "racial" policies. What he would soon learn, however, was that his penchant for social reform would soon lead to his being stripped of domestic duties and assigned once again to the theater of war.<sup>28</sup> With the rendering of the Army's decision, DuBois found that he had placed himself squarely "between a rock and a hard place," as black folk are still fond of saying. He had satisfied no one—niether conservatives, who evinced little interest in social reform, nor those of more progressive mien who felt compromise under existing circumstances to be a disastrous policy. Despite claims of his critics, DuBois' patriotic retreat from militancy during the war does not seem to have been the crass result of Springarn's having dangled the alluring prospects of a captaincy before him. Rather, it appears to have arisen from a number of factors, the most critical of which seems to have been the fragile ambivalence of DuBois' own ideological formulations, now pushed to the Right under the weight of extreme political pressures. With criticism refusing to subside, DuBois then sought to establish that his July editorial was "in exact accord and almost in the very same words of a resolution written by the same hand and passed unanimously by the

thirty-one editors of all the leading Negro publications in America.”<sup>29</sup> But the sad truth was that while the editorial clearly sought to downplay the “special grievances” of black Americans for the purpose of winning the war, the conference resolution called for a “minimum of consideration” in this area in order to make the Negro an “efficient fighter for victory.” Both positions had indeed been penned by the same, ambivalent hand. For the moment, at least, sheer strength alone had failed to keep “two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body” from tearing it asunder.

#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> *Amsterdam News* (29 May 1918); copy in Record Group 165: Records of the War Department General and Special Staffs; Entry 65; MID 10218-163 (National Archives). All other references to MID 10218 files refer to this same record group. The editorial bears the style of Cyril V. Briggs, who was eventually dismissed from the paper for publishing militant editorials during the war.

<sup>2</sup> See, for example, *Crisis* (September 1918), 218-19.

<sup>3</sup> Hubert H. Harrison, *When Africa Awakes* (New York: Porro Press, 1920), 68; a copy of Harrison's editorial can be found in Joanne Grant, *Black Protest: History, Documents, Analyses, 1619 to the Present* (New York: Fawcett Publications, 1968), 185-87.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 69-70.

<sup>5</sup> Joyce Ross, *J. E. Springarn and the Rise of the NAACP, 1911-1939* (New York: Atheneum, 1973), 97.

<sup>6</sup> Judged by the content of extant military memoranda bearing on Springarn's actions, the greatest portion of his time appears to have been expended in the latter category.

<sup>7</sup> See Appendix A.

<sup>8</sup> *Crisis* (September 1918), 215.

<sup>9</sup> The head of the NAACP's legal committee was indeed assigned to monitor the contents of the *Crisis* prior to publication. To what extent this action was primarily the result of Springarn's maneuvering or that of the NAACP's Board of Directors, is difficult to determine. There is little doubt, however, that a direct relationship existed between DuBois's subsequent “Close Ranks” editorial and pressures exerted by the Justice Department through his NAACP colleagues. See Elliot Rudwick, *W. E. B. DuBois: Propagandist of the Negro Protest* (New York: Atheneum, 1968), 202.

<sup>10</sup> See Appendix A.

<sup>11</sup> *Crisis* (September 1918), 215.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 216.

<sup>13</sup> Scott and Springarn to Creel, 5 June 1918. MID 10218-154.

<sup>14</sup> New York *Evening Post*, 1 July 1918; copy in MID 10218-154.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Springarn to Churchill, 22 June 1918. MID 10218-154.

<sup>18</sup> Springarn to Churchill, 22 June 1918.

<sup>19</sup> *Crisis* (August 1918), 163-64.

<sup>20</sup> Springarn to Churchill, 22 June 1918.

<sup>21</sup> Springarn and one Capt. Hornblower appeared in fact before the Committee of the Judiciary on 6 June in support of such a bill; Hornblower apparently wrote the first draft of the initial bill which Dyer submitted to Congress. Springarn to Churchill, 10 June 1918.

<sup>22</sup> Newton Baker to Woodrow Wilson, 19 July 1918; MID 10218-154. *Washington Post* (27 July 1918); copy in MID 10218-154. *New York Times* (27 July 1918).

<sup>23</sup> Committee on Public Information, 26 July 1918. MID 10218-154.

<sup>24</sup> The second version passed the House in late January 1922; facing a filibuster in the Senate, the bill was dropped by the Republicans in caucus in December of that same year. *New York Times* (27 January, 3 December 1922).

<sup>25</sup> *Freeman* (6 July 1918); copy in MID 10218-154.

<sup>26</sup> *Crisis* (September 1918), 216.

<sup>27</sup> I have not yet attempted an exhaustive survey of the period of time over which military surveillance of Afro-American civilians persisted. However, extant records indicate that Army intelligence operations directed toward such organizations as the Universal Negro Improvement Association continued as late as 1921.

<sup>28</sup> Ross, 101.

<sup>29</sup> *Crisis* (September 1918), 216.

## APPENDIX A

### EXECUTIVE DIVISION MILITARY INTELLIGENCE BRANCH

In replying refer to  
M.I.B. 10218-154

### WAR DEPARTMENT OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF STAFF WASHINGTON

June 10, 1918

Memorandum for Colonel Churchill.

Subject: Negro Subversion.

I reported for duty in M.I.B. on May 27th and was assigned to work on (1) Bolsheviki; I.W.W. etc., (2) Negro Subversion.

I immediately formulated the following program for work in Negro Subversion:

I. Intelligence.

- (a) Organization throughout the country of counter espionage system among colored people themselves.
- (b) Conference of thirty or forty colored editors and race leaders in Washington.
- (c) Letters to editors of the 200 colored papers and others, following the conference.
- (d) Increase and organization of colored intelligence officers throughout the U.S.
- (e) Co-operation with Mr. Emmett Scott, Special Ass't to the Secretary of War.

II. Counter propaganda (to offset chief causes of colored disaffection).

- (a) Passage of anti-lynching legislation in Congress.
- (b) Address or proclamation by President indicating that (during the war) lynching will be regarded as disloyal, and aiding the enemy, since it causes disaffection among 12,000,000 people.
- (c) Denial by Gen. Pershing of false reports of treatment of colored troops abroad.
- (d) Assignment of Col. Charles Young, U.S.A., retired, to active service.
- (e) Stimulating counter propaganda in the press through the Committee on Public Propaganda. (sic)
- (f) Discouraging vicious anti-negro utterances in white press.

As illustrations of how this program is being carried out, the following are mentioned.

1. A conference of colored editors and other colored leaders will be held in Washington June 19-21. Their actual and necessary expenses will be paid by the Committee on Public Information. (See copy of letter signed by Mr. Scott and myself, enclosed.)
2. Lt. T. M. Gregory, 349th F.A. has applied for transfer to M.I.B., and other Intelligence Officers will shortly be selected.
3. A bill, drafted by Capt. Hornblower at my suggestion (see enclosed copy) was submitted to Representative Dyer, and at the request of the Judiciary Committee, Capt. Hornblower and myself appeared before it on June 6th and explained the necessity of such legislation. (With approval of Col. Coxe and Capt. Hunt)

4. Various suggestions have been made to Mr. Scott, which he has agreed to carry out—for example, that a page of "plate matter" be furnished weekly to the colored press.
5. Cablegrams be sent to I.O., A.E.F., in regard to treatment of colored troops.
6. Interview with Dr. DuBois, editor of chief colored magazine, "The Crisis" (monthly circulation 70,000), who has promised—
  - (a) to submit all matter in magazine to designated person in advance of publication, and—
  - (b) to make his paper an organ of patriotic propaganda hereafter.
7. Work begun on organization of counter espionage committee of colored people ("Advisory Committee to the Chief of Staff of the Army.")

The following recommendations are made:

- (1) That Negro Subversion in all its forms be assigned to a separate and distinct section of M.I.B.
- (2) That the Secretary of War recommend the immediate passage of anti-lynching legislation as a war measure.
- (3) That the restoration of Col. Young to active service be given immediate consideration.
- (4) That the creation of an "Advisory Committee to the Chief of Staff of the Army" be officially authorized.
- (5) That the advisability, on military grounds, of an address or proclamation by the President declaring lynching during the war to be disloyal be called to his attention by the Secretary of War.

J. E. Spingarn,  
Major Inf. R. C.

Enc. 1  
mcb.

APPENDIX B

I. ADDRESS TO THE COMMITTEE ON  
PUBLIC INFORMATION\*

JUNE 21, 1918

We, the thirty-one representatives of the Negro press which has a circulation of more than a million copies principally among the colored people of America, and representatives of other racial activities, wish to affirm, first of all, our unalterable belief that the defeat of the German government and what it today represents is of paramount interest to the welfare of the world in general and to our people in particular.

We deem it hardly necessary, in view of the untarnished record of Negro Americans, to reaffirm our loyalty to Our Country and our readiness to make every sacrifice to win this war. We wish, however, as students and guides of public opinion among our people, to use our every endeavor to keep these 12,000,000 people at the highest pitch, not simply of passive loyalty, but of active, enthusiastic and self-sacrificing participation in the war.

We are not unmindful of the recognition of our American citizenship in the draft, of the appointment of colored officers, of the designation of colored advisors to the Government departments, and of other indications of a broadened public opinion, nevertheless we believe today that justifiable grievances of the colored people are producing not disloyalty, but an amount of unrest and bitterness which even the

\*Italics indicate unpublished sections of the original document. The version printed in the August 1918 *Crisis* began with the words "We American Negroes wish to affirm. . . ."

best efforts of their leaders may not be able always to guide unless they can have the active and sympathetic cooperation of the National and State governments. German propaganda among us is powerless, but the apparent indifference of our own Government may be dangerous.

*First and foremost among these grievances is LYNCHING. Since the entrance of the United States in this war, 71 Negroes have been lynched, including four women, and over 178 have been victims of mob violence. The atrocities committed by American mobs during this time have been among the worst known to civilized life, and yet not a single person has been punished for lynching a Negro, nor have white mob*

*leaders anywhere been brought to adequate justice.*

*The effect of these facts upon the Negro people has been indescribably depressing, and we earnestly believe (and growing white southern opinion is coming to believe), that Federal intervention to suppress lynching is imperative. We urge a strong, clear word on lynching from the President of the United States, and then such legislation by Congress as will enable the Federal Government to go to the limit of the Constitution, under its war powers and under its other powers, to stamp out this custom which is not only holding our Nation up to just criticism, but is seriously affecting the morale of 12,000,000 Americans.*

*Secondly, -when American Negroes patriotically offer their services to help win the war, these services are too often refused, or accepted with reluctance, or with disconcerting discrimination. The Nation, for instance, has asked for Physicians and Red Cross nurses, and has accepted only a few colored physicians; the Civil Service officials are advertising for skilled workers and for stenographers and clerks, but successful colored applicants are repeatedly refused appointment on the ground that they are colored; no colored men today can serve in the Navy as able seamen, while in the Army no colored volunteers are received outside of four regiments, and difficulties are put before colored men and officers who seek training and promotion.*

*If the Nation wants our help, our help has been and will be offered, but what shall we say or think when needed aid is refused?*

*Finally, attention is called to conditions of travel among colored people. The railroads are now under United States control. Colored people, just as their white fellows, are moving here and there, as soldiers and workers. They feel, therefore, with special keenness the injustice of first-class fares and third-class accommodation and frequent other embarrassing discriminations.*

*These are the pressing grievances which today are stirring our people; the American Negro does not expect to have the whole Negro problem settled immediately; he is not seeking to hold-up a striving country and a distracted world by pushing irrelevant personal grievances as a price of loyalty; he is not disposed to catalogue, in this tremendous crisis, all his complaints and disabilities; he is more than willing to do his full share in helping to win the war for democracy and he expects his full share of the fruits thereof;—but he is today compelled to ask for that minimum of consideration which will enable him to be an efficient fighter for victory, namely:*

- (1) Better conditions of public travel
- (2) The acceptance of help where help is needed regardless of the color of the helper
- (3) The immediate suppression of lynching

All these things are matters not simply of justice, but of National and group efficiency; they are actions designed to still the natural unrest and apprehension among one-eighth of our citizens so as to enable them wholeheartedly and unselfishly to throw their every ounce of effort into this mighty and righteous war.

## II. BILL OF PARTICULARS, TO BE SUBMITTED PRIVATELY TO BUREAU HEADS IN WASHINGTON

A BILL OF PARTICULARS ON WHICH, IT IS SUGGESTED,  
ACTION MIGHT BE TAKEN

- (1) National legislation on lynching
- (2) Colored Red Cross nurses
- (3) Colored able seamen
- (4) Colored volunteer soldiers to the extent of their volunteering
- (5) Colored physicians for colored troops
- (6) Training of larger number of colored officers
- (7) Unlimited promotion of colored officers according to proven efficiency
- (8) Utilizing the services of Colonel Charles Young (Retired)
- (9) An attempt to equalize among black and white troops the proportion of draftees assigned to Stevedore regiments, service battalions, etc.
- (10) Systematic getting and dissemination of news of Negro troops at home and abroad
- (11) Systematic attempt to correct ridiculous and (?) representation of the Negro and omissions of his achievement in the white press
- (12) The consideration of a Government loan to the Negro Republic of Liberia, now actively aligned with the Allies
- (13) Executive clemency for the Negro soldiers recently tried and sentenced at Fort Sam Houston, Texas
- (14) Condition of travel among colored people